


Hagar and Sarah, Sarah and Hagar

ROSELLEN BROWN

Everyone, real or imagined, deserves the open destiny of life.

GRACE PALEY,

A Conversation with My Father

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children; and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram: "Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing; go in, I pray thee, unto my handmaid; it may be that I shall be built up through her." And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Abram her husband to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was overcome with sorrow admixed with joy, for her husband's house was thereby strengthened without her.

Now Sarai would not make free with her pain, but Hagar came before her and said "How is it with you? Was it not your wish that your house and your husband's house wax with my waxing?" And Sarai wept that her handmaid should supplant her in the eyes of her husband and become the mother of generations by the hand of the Lord. But Hagar embraced her mistress and swore loyalty to her house, saying, "You also shall be as a mother to this child."

And the angel of the Lord, seeing that Hagar dealt kindly with her mistress, said unto her, "I will greatly multiply thy seed that it shall not be numbered for multitude." And the angel of the Lord said unto her: "Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son; and thou shalt call his name Ishmael. And he shall be a gentle deer of a man; his hand shall be joined in friendship with every man, and every man's with his; and he shall dwell in the heart of all his brethren." And Ha-

A Woman's

gar invited the empty flesh as she labored

And Abram, now Al years old and nine, who skin. And Ishmael his cumcised in the flesh those born in the house were circumcised with

And the Lord reme and bore Abraham a s years old, when his s "God hath made laugh account of me." And that Sarah should give his old age." And the a great feast on the da of Hagar the Egypti Sarah's blessing, mal she did naught to m had said at the time in thy sight. Thou al reprove him and he spoke words to Ishn ing hard words, no Lord had promised,

And they were s Isaac and Ishmael. cry. When this on Whosoever found came to pass that a was tall and strong Egyptian not a slav sack of shekels for thou and buy som

Now Hagar and Sarah had seen the love of Isaac and Ishmael and together they rejoiced, but Abraham favored Isaac, who was the seed of Sarah's fathers and her fathers' fathers. But Sarah rebuked him, saying: "There shall be no peace in our house if thou dividest thy love as a loaf of bread, in unequal portions. Forasmuch as God hath opened our wombs together to thee, neither son shalt thou put above the other. Flesh is flesh and blood blood and the sinew that binds us one to one is nothing but the breath of life."

And all their days their sons were not divided, but as if under covenant they shared their portion and lived as brothers who stood before but a single mother. And each in time was father to a multitude which lived in harmony according to their wishes, Ishmael and Isaac, the sons of Abraham borne by two stars in the firmament who, in this prayer to what might have been, held them close and loved them equally.

So The Heel

*What woman here is s
see her heelprint upon
oppression have becom
fold of the righteo*

*"The Uses of
from Siste*

If feminism is about t
and Hagar is a founda
(The story of Sarah
women.) It is a story
to it is to admit that
terrible lack of comj
Hagar is a key sourc
American feminist, I
bring each other in
one another, to leav
nism begins, not wi
women, but with se
other's faces. Neith
print each left on
recognition has bu
tempt to rescue if v
imagine our own li
But you may ask
the Jewish people'